

The International GPS Service in 1997:
5 Years of Practical Experience; 3 Years of Official IAG Service

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Since June, 1992, the International GPS Service has been coordinating global GPS activities supporting requirements of geodetic and geophysical applications. A key aspect of the IGS is the reliability and quality of the analysis products that have been made available over the past five years through the IGS Analysis Centers. On a daily basis these IGS centers produce satellite orbits, Earth orientation parameters, satellite and receiver clocks, and atmospheric data. The IGS ensures accessibility to these products and information in service of science through Global Data Centers and the Central Bureau Information Service (CBIS at <http://igs.cb.jpl.nasa.gov/>) which make accessible information on all components of the service (stations, network, data centers, analysis centers, etc.), the products of the centers and links to the data holdings at the regional or global data centers.

The IGS began operating as an official scientific service recognized by the International Association of Geodesy on January 1, 1994. Since then, the combined IGS orbits are produced by the IGS Analysis Center Coordinator at NRCan, Canada. Recent developments in the IGS community include the Densification Project of the International Terrestrial Reference Frame through GPS, generation of an official IGS eop series, combined site-specific tropospheric estimates, and ionospheric delay estimates from the IGS network. Additionally the IGS is now considering its role in supporting upcoming Low Earth Orbiting missions, as well as its potential contribution to long term monitoring of sea level heights and altimeter calibration through the GPS.

In this year 1997, the IGS has achieved many of the goals and objectives of the fundamental service. However, the role of the IGS is evolving as the multi-disciplinary sciences, dependent on the GPS technique, contribute to shaping our future directions.